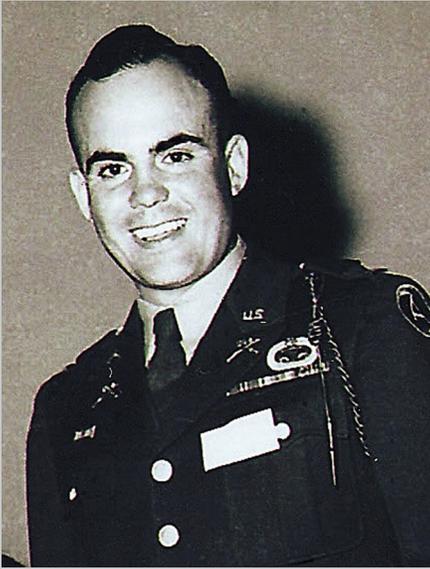


# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MAJOR  
CAESAR J. CIVITELLA**

Inducted February 2010



Major Caesar J. Civitella joined the U.S. Army in February 1943. He completed basic training, initially assigned to the Amphibious Engineers at Cape Cod. He then volunteered for and attended basic airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was assigned to duty at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

Within a week of this assignment, he was ordered to appear before a screening board for testing of his Italian language fluency and was thoroughly questioned about his background. This began Major Civitella's career with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

In early 1944, after eight month intense training, Team Lafayette of which he was a part, were inserted into North Africa to support Operation Dragoon—the allied invasion of Southern France. This was his first operational jump behind enemy lines. Team Lafayette, along with two other Operational Groups (OGs), captured nearly 4,000 Axis Soldiers after employing psychological warfare against the finance section of a Nazi Division in France. Following their mission in Southern France, Team Lafayette went to Italy. There he participated in 21 air operations dropping leaflets as a “Bundle Kicker.”

In April 1945, Major Civitella conducted a second operational jump as a member of Team Sewanee in the Alps along the Swiss border. Their missions included reporting on German activity, assisting downed airmen and preventing German “Scorched Earth” activities. They were also supposed to capture Benito Mussolini, but after much planning and hard work, this mission was scrubbed. Partisans had already killed Mussolini before the team arrived.

In 1946, Major Civitella was discharged from the Army and attended the University of Pennsylvania until reenlisting in 1947 as a counter-intelligence NCO. Assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, he applied for and received a direct commission in 1951.

2nd Lieutenant Civitella was among the first to be recruited into the newly created Special Forces in 1952. He assisted in the development of doctrine, lesson plans and training aids at the US Army Psychological Warfare Center and was one of the original instructors who taught guerrilla warfare and air operations to the first two Special Forces classes (officer and enlisted). He was then assigned to help stand up the 77th SFG(A) before being assigned to the 10th SFG(A) in Bad Toelz, Germany in 1955. Three years later, Major Civitella returned to the Special Warfare Center and School, formerly called the PSYWAR Center, assigned to the Combat Development Office.

In January 1961, Major Civitella began the first of three tours in Vietnam. During this time, he worked on different insertion and extraction methods, including Scuba, Halo and the Fulton “Skyhook” extraction system. Eighteen days before his retirement, he was successfully “snatched-up” by a Caribou airplane using the Fulton Skyhook. Although retiring from the U.S. Army on 31 August 1964, Major Civitella continued in special operations, immediately joining the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) the next day. He was first assigned to the Agency's Air Branch to support clandestine service air requirements. He returned to Vietnam in 1967 to serve as the Senior Province Officer in Charge for Kien Phong Province, a post he held for two years, supervising SOF and Vietnamese personnel.

In 1976, Major Civitella was assigned to the CIA's Plans Branch as the liaison officer to the Pentagon for Special Operations. In this position he was heavily involved in the development, validation and certification of the first emergency response force – 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment—Delta – and later, Operation Eagle Claw, providing key intelligence support to the hostage rescue attempt. Major Civitella's last CIA assignment was on February 1, 1981. As the Interagency Representative to the US Readiness Command (US REDCOM) and the newly established Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), both based at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, he coordinated the interagency operational, intelligence and training for both.

On August 31, 1983, upon Major Civitella's retirement from the CIA, he was awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit for his work as, “an extremely talented and gifted operations officer.”

Major Civitella has authored /co-authored and had several articles written in the 50-year Special Forces History and “Veritas”. On May 19, 2008, he was presented the Bull Simons Award for his outstanding and dedicated service to the Special Operations community. In retirement, he continues to be involved in the Special Operations community as an active member of the OSS Society and Special Forces Association.